

"A Fistful Of Aces!"

Text: Exodus 14:8b, "And the children of Israel went out with an high hand."

Scripture: Acts 13:13-32

In todays modern world almost anyone recognizes that an ace is the highest in rank. In military circles, an ace is one who has overcome more of the enemy than the rest of their comrades. People remark about ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ a beloved and true friend

~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ "He is aces with me," thus signifying that he is the greatest. In card circles, a ~~hand~~ "Fistful of Aces" is an unbeatable hand.

(Perhaps an illustration of card playing here)
a portion

In our Scripture this morning we read of Paul's first recorded sermon. Now it does not spell it out in this scripture, so I am taking what is known as literary license to make a comparison between this Scripture, and relate it to our day, our thinking, and to use something we can use to make it more understandable.

~~Paul~~ In Exodus the 14th chapter ~~and~~ ^{the} latter part of the 8th verse we read, "And the children of Israel went out with an high ~~hand~~." Now I am well aware that this verse does not imply cardplaying on the part of the children of Israel. But let us just put it in this context this morning to simplify it for our understanding. Now this particular verse is quoted by Paul in the portion of Scripture we read this morning. In the 13th chapter of Acts, ~~xxxxxx~~ we read of Paul's first recorded sermon. Paul and Barnabas had come to ~~xxxxx~~ Antioch and went to the Synagogue on the Jewish Sabbath. After the reading of the Law and Prophets from the sacred scrolls, they were invited to speak as was the custom.

Paul was speaking to Jews in a Jewish setting and the words of his sermon first told of the history of what God had done for them as a people. and secondly he told them of their unbelief that the Messiah had come and lived among them. Now we do not read all of the ramifications of what Paul said, but one cannot help but feel there must have been some murmurings and discontent as this upstart of a preacher stood before them and tramped on their toes.

Paul begins (vs 17), by telling that God had chosen this people and had lifted them above the Egyptians among whom they lived. He tells them, quoting from Exodus 14:8, "And with an high arm brought he them out of it." We need to understand that many times Paul quotes Scripture from the Old Testament, but many times he misquotes it. Of all the Biblical personalities Paul is one who relies upon his memory for scripture and more often than not misquotes it. This is not to say that Paul was unable to convey the message because of this, it is merely to point out what he did on many occasions.

When God brought the children of Israel out of Egypt as Paul states it in vs 17, we could call this one ace. Ace 2 is vs 18, #3 vs 19, #4 vs 20, #5 vs 21, #6 vs 22, # 7 vs 23, #8 vs 24,25. Now perhaps you may be thinking that there are only 4 aces in a deck of cards, and you are right. But when we are talking about God, we must always remember that God does not act or do things as in a normal circumstance. God always gives back more than is ever given to Him. If there is one lesson that every Christian should and must be aware of, it is the lesson that you absolutely cannot outgive God. The more you give, the more He will give in return. And here in the capsulated history that Paul shared with these Jewish people, God has given the children of Israel "A Fistful of Aces."

Now from this portion of Scripture there are some things that we can apply to our present day and age. We see first that God is sufficient for all of the needs of His people.

(Illustration of the promises of God, from Barnhouse)

God helps His people in times of stress to give them His calm assurance that He is there. His promise that was imparted to us by His Son Jesus Christ was that He would not leave us comfortless. Thus we can see the evidence of the Holy Spirit in many areas of life if we are willing to place all aspects of our life in His hands.

Next we see that God supplies for the material needs of His children. For the Israelites this first took the form of supplying their needs in the wilderness for 40 years. Paul states it, "Forty years bore He their manners

in the wilderness." By this he means that God patiently listened to their grumblings and moanings about life and how it was treating them. And don't you imagine that God is still patiently listening to the grumblings and ~~groanings~~ groanings of His people today? I am sure He is, but I am also sure that many times we are not the right kind of people to be grumbling and groaning because many times our problems are self-inflicted. A good example of this is the situation in many parts of the world.

(Illustration of living on 100 dollars a year)

This is a good example of what is happening in the world. We publicize this type of thing and we question why it is permitted, and why it happens, and all of the other things that remain unanswerable about it. Others may well question hunger and starvation in our world today by asking, "Is this an example of God giving Aces to His children?" Which is a good question, but the answer lies in within the inner circles of our denominations. We are more concerned with spending dollars in too many areas that should take secondary priority. Our government officials are more concerned about keeping the prices of certain commodities up, and the way to do this is to let certain crops rot, rather than have them marketed and distributed to the needy throughout the world. America is going to pay for its extreme waste as a people and as a nation, and rightly so. We talk of inflation and shortages, and they are present today, because of our selfishness throughout the world. Jesus talked of God being aware of the sparrow and its needs, and how God is more concerned over his children than the birds. David Brainerd was a missionary to the American Indians in the early days of our country. He tells the story of the ~~providence~~ God supplying his needs at one point in his life.

(Illustration #908 2400 Quotations, illustrations)

This is one of the aces God supplied for His people down through the many centuries, but He also expects man to help distribute this supply of what He has given for all mankind.

Next we see that God has given to His people Salvation. He was not content to ~~only~~ ^{NEEDLY} be sufficient ^{TO SUPPLY} for their material needs, or to supply for their comfort for their hours of need.

It is good to sing praises unto the Lord, for He is great, and greatly to be praised. Ascribe to the Lord the glory due His name.

ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
BUTLER, PENNSYLVANIA
SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST SEPTEMBER 29, 1974
REV. RALPH C. LINK, PASTOR
MRS. MARILYN STEPHENSON, ORGANIST
MR. RALPH COOPER, CHOIR DIRECTOR
PAM FRY, MARY DELLEN - ACOLYTES

ORDER OF WORSHIP 11:00 A.M.

PRELUDE MUSIC: "Andante" RHEINBERGER
"Pastorale" BURNEY

SILENT PRAYER

*PROCESSIONAL HYMN No. 23 "OPEN NOW THY GATES OF BEAUTY"

*ASCRPTION - CHORAL AMEN

*EXHORTATION

*CONFESSION (IN UNISON) "HAVE MERCY UPON US, O GOD,
ACCORDING TO YOUR LOVING - KINDNESS; ACCORDING TO THE
MULTITUDE OF YOUR TENDER MERCIES, BLOT OUT OUR TRANSGRESSIONS.
WASH US THOROUGHLY FROM OUR INIQUITIES, AND CLEANSE US
FROM OUR SINS. FOR WE ACKNOWLEDGE OUR TRANSGRESSIONS, AND
OUR SINS ARE EVER BEFORE US. PURGE US AND WE SHALL BE
CLEAN; WASH US AND WE SHALL BE WHITER THAN SNOW. CREATE
IN US CLEAN HEARTS, O GOD, AND PUT A NEW AND RIGHT SPIRIT
WITHIN US. CAST US NOT AWAY FROM YOUR PRESENCE, AND TAKE
NOT YOUR HOLY SPIRIT FROM US. RESTORE TO US THE JOY OF
YOUR SALVATION, AND UPHOLD US WITH A WILLING SPIRIT.
IN THE NAME OF CHRIST, YOUR SON, OUR LORD. AMEN."

*KYRIE (CHOIR, CONGREGATION AND PASTOR)

*ASSURANCE OF PARDON - CHORAL AMEN

*PRAISE

*PASTOR: O LORD OPEN OUR EYES.

*PEOPLE: AND OUR MOUTH SHALL SHOW FORTH THY PRAISE.

*DOXOLOGY No. 551

SCRIPTURE LESSON: ACTS 13: 13-33

HYMN No. 280 "BLEST BE THE TIE THAT BINDS"

*AFFIRMATION OF OUR FAITH (APOSTLES' CREED)

*GLORIA PATRI

*CALL TO PRAYER

*PASTOR: THE LORD BE WITH YOU.

*PEOPLE: AND WITH THY SPIRIT.

*PASTOR: LET US PRAY.

OVER AT PRAYER RESPONSE

OFFERING

OFFERTORY: "OVER THE STARS" ABT

ANTHEM: "ONLY A WHISPERED PRAYER" BY MEREDITH

WOMEN'S CHORUS

SERMON: "A FISTFUL OF ACES"

PRAYER AND LORD'S PRAYER

*HYMN OF DEDICATION No. 318 "NEARER, MY GOD, TO THEE"

*BENEDICTION AND THREE FOLD AMEN

ORGAN POSTLUDE: "POSTLUDE"

MOZART

--- *CONGREGATION STANDING ---

THE LOVELY FLOWERS ON THE ALTAR HAVE BEEN PLACED BY

MRS. MARCE TRACE IN MEMORY OF HER "HUSBAND" -

ARTHUR C. TRACE.

SERVING AS USHERS TODAY ARE: *ALVIN TAIT, MIKE NAZARUK,

ROBERT STEWART AND RICHARD MANGEL.

MR. & MRS. EARL WOGAN WILL REPRESENT COUNCIL AT THE

FOUR THIS MORNING.

SERVING IN NURSERY TODAY DURING MORNING WORSHIP -

MRS. JUNE SNYDER AND PATTY BAGERRE.

THE ATTENDANCE LAST SUNDAY WAS 219. *EVERETT McCLAMME is*

HOSPITALIZED: MRS. AMELIA DREHER, MR. WM. A. WINTERS,

RAYMOND MILLER - BCMH: LEO BALDAUF - V.A. HOSPITAL.

OUR CHURCH HAS CHARGE OF USHERING PATIENTS TO SERVICE

AT THE VETERANS ADMINISTRATION HOSPITAL DURING THE

MONTH OF OCTOBER. IF YOU ARE ASKED OR YOU CAN HELP,

PLEASE DO SO - CONTACT BILL PFLUGH - HE NEEDS ALL

THE HELP HE CAN GET.

TODAY NINE (9) OF OUR YOUTH ARE AT THE YOUTH RALLY

AT CAMP LIVING WATERS - THIS WAS A TWO DAY EVENT.

TODAY - LAKE ERIE ASSOCIATION MEETING AT SHARON -

2:30 - 8:00 - IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO GO YOU WOULD BE

WELCOME.

WEDNESDAY - 7:30 - COUNCIL MEETING

THURSDAY - THE NEWSLETTER WILL BE PUBLISHED - PLEASE

HAVE ALL MATERIAL IN BY WEDNESDAY.

WORLD WIDE COMMUNION WILL BE NEXT SUNDAY AT 11:00 A.M.

THE FOLLOWING SUNDAY - OCT. 13 - BAPTISM.

TUESDAY - OCT. 15 - SOUP AND SALAD SUPPER SPONSORED

BY WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP. TICKETS CAN BE OBTAINED FROM

ANY MEMBER OF CIRCLES.

MON - 7:30 - CONSTITUTIONAL REV. COMM. MEETING.

His promise imparted by Jo Xp He not leave comfort2/
See evidence H. Sp. many areas life, less
if willing place all aspects life His hands
Ne see God supplies all material needs His child.
4 sites took form supply needs 40yr wilderness
stated, "Forty years bore He their manners in
the wilderness."

By this he mean God patiently listened their grumblings
& moan about life & how treat them.

Don't U imagine God still patiently listening our
grumblings/groanings 2day?

I sure He is,

But I also sure many times we not rt kind peop
2 B grumbling/groaning because many times our
probs self-inflicted.

Good examp this is situation many parts world

(Illustration living 100 dollars year.)

This good illus what happening in world

We publicize this & question why permitted,
why it happen?

Others may question "Is this an examp of God giving
aces to His children?"

This good question,

but answer lie inner circles denoms

Many times spend money things should take 2nd place

Govt officials more concerned keep prices up
certain commodities, thus many things rot, thrown
away,

but could be dist/marketed for needy in world

But America pay for waste as peop & nation

We talk inflation shortages, they present cause
st. richness & greed

Js talked God aware of sparrows & needs, & how God
more concerned His children.

He tells God supply needs in life.

(David Brainerd tells God supply needs illustration)

This 1 ace, God supplied 4 his peop many centuries,
But He also expect man help dist. supply He give
mankind.

Next, we C God given His peop Salvation.

He not only content merely supply comfort hrs need,
Or supply material needs,

But had save them from themselves

His He promised would come thru David

His He did altho children Is. refuse accept Js
Nazareth as MESSIAH

"A Fistful Of Aces!"

Text: Exodus 14:8b, "And the children of Israel went
out with an high hand."

Scripture: Acts 13:13-33

In 2days mod world almost any 1 recognise ace hi ran
Military circles ace 1 overcome more of enemy
peop remark beloved true friend, Aces with me
thus signify he greatest

In card circles "Fistful of Aces" unbeatable

In Ex. 14:8b we read (read text)

I aware this no imply lsites cardplayers

Let us put thio/thio context this AM to simplify

In 13th chap Acts Paul's 1st sermon

P. & Barn come Antioch on Jew Sabb

After reading of Law/prophets from sacred
scrolls, they invited speak

Paul was speak Jews/Jewish setting

words of sermtold history God done them as peop
He told them of unbelief in Messiah

Cannot know sure, but must been murmurings,
discontent as upstart preach stood B4 them &
tramped on toes.

P begin vs 17 tell God chose peop,

He quote Ex. 14:8, wrongly,

he often do this, quote memory & wrong

He convey message, but misquote

ACES, vs 17 #1, #2 vs 18, #3 vs 19, #4 vs 20,
#5 vs 21, #6 vs 22, #7 vs 23, #8 vs 24-26.

Now this add up 8, only 4 in deck,

But God always give more than given Him

This lesson every Xpian should know,

cannot outgive God,

More U give, more He give U

Here in Acts 13, capsulated form history P

shared Jewish peop,

God given "A Fistful Of Aces"

From this portion ocrip some things we can apply
present day & age.

See 1st God sufficient needs of all peop
(Illustration Promises of God, Barnhouse)

G helps peop times stress to give calm assur He
there.

Thus God not only fulfilled prophecy by send 3/ ~~xx~~
Son into world,

But He provide means salv 4 mankind which ours 4 taking

So n all this we C not only provided Children is
down thru ages with "A Fistful Of Aces",

7 He also provided U & me with "A Fistful Of Aces
as well.

What He gave Ab, Is, Jac, Dave, Sol, P & others
is ours too

What a hand hold as go thru life

The Hand Of God, "A Fistful of Aces"

Can U not C my friends that with all this we riche
any king ever reigned?

As "~~Children of Israel went out with an high hand,~~"
so can we by taking the Fistful Of Aces that God
extends to each His children.

& let us never forget that though life may have toll
troubles, we always have a Saviour that closer any
earthly friend,

& we need thank God each day 4 Him,

4 He is God's Ultimate gift to our hand.

Shirley & Ralph Charles Link, Nancy Link, Dale with Lianne his wife, Lloyd Link with Karen his wife
Jessica in front of Ralph C. Link
Ethan and Alisha in front of R. Dale and Lianne Link (the eldest son & family)









Ralph C. Link
153 Keck Road
Sarver, Pa. 16055
(412) 352-1103

Born: April 9, 1929, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Married: December 15, 1951
Wife: Shirley Margaret Neill
Born: December 8, 1930, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Children: Ralph Dale Link, born May 11, 1955, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Lloyd Alan Link, born May 28, 1958, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Nancy Lynn Link, born March 15, 1961, Butler, Pa.

SCHOOLING:

Graduated from Perry High School, Pittsburgh, Pa.
June 1947

Lay Ministry School, Penn West Conference of United
Church of Christ, September 1965 to May 1969

Commissioned Lay Minister June 1969

Lancaster Theological Seminary, Lancaster, Pa.,
September 1970

Graduated from Lancaster Theological Seminary May 1974

Ordained to Christian Ministry March 10, 1974

PASTORATES:

As Lay Minister: short term, 1 month or less in
various churches 1965 to 1967

Emlenton Lamartine Charge of United Church of Christ
1967 to 1969

Short term in various churches 1970 until Seminary
entrance July 1970

July 1970 to December 1973 Student Pastor at Trinity
Charge, New Bloomfield, Duncannon, Pa., Penn Central
Conference, United Church of Christ

December 1973 to present, St. Paul's United Church of
Christ, Butler, Pa., Penn West Conference, United
Church of Christ

PERSONAL TESTIMONY

OF

Ralph C. Link

I am the youngest of five children. I was born just prior to the onset of the Depression. Our family was very poor. My father was an alcoholic and my mother was a very religious person who was searching for the Lord. During my childhood she did her best to teach me the things of the Lord. Later in life she came to a personal relationship with Him.

I grew up in the Evangelical and Reformed Church where salvation by grace alone was not preached nor taught. I knew all about Jesus, what He did, how He lived, His miracles, His death and resurrection, but I didn't know Him personally.

My life had many ups and downs and all the while I was attending church and striving with my good works to please God. At a very low point in my life when we were deeply in debt and my wife and three children were all ill, I came to the crossroads. I watched a Billy Graham Crusade on television from some distant city and the message he preached seemed to be directed right at me. I wrestled with making that commitment to Christ, but didn't. The next afternoon and evening at work on the 4 to 12 shift I came to the conclusion that I needed to make that commitment to Christ. It seemed like there was no other choice if life was to have any meaning. That night when I came home from work at 1:00 A.M., I laid face down on the living room floor and told God that I couldn't live my life in my own strength and I accepted the gift of salvation from my Savior Jesus Christ. My life has never been the same.

Through several meaningful circumstances I was called by God to serve Him in the Christian Ministry and to help spread that wonderful message of salvation through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. What a wonderful and rewarding time it has been and I give Him all the praise for my salvation and the opportunity to serve Him.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

OF

Ralph C. Link

I believe the Bible, both the Old and New Testaments to be the inspired inerrant Word of God. I believe the Bible is the complete revelation of His will for the salvation of men and it is the final authority for the Christian faith and life.

I believe in one God, who is eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

I believe in the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ that He is true God and true man. I believe that He was born of the Virgin Mary, that He lived in sinless life, that He performed the miracles recorded in Scripture, that He died on the cross as a sacrifice for our sins, that He bodily arose from the dead, that He ascended on high where He is at the right hand of Almighty God as our intercessor.

I believe in the Holy Spirit and that He comes and indwells each believer at the time of conversion. I believe that He lives in each believer to lead, to instruct, and to convict so that a believer may live a more godly life.

I believe that through the shed blood of Jesus Christ and through His resurrection, this is the only ground for justification and salvation for all who receive Him. A Lord and Savior and to such as receive Him, they are born of the Holy Spirit and become children of God.

I believe water baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances of the Church but are not means of salvation.

I believe in the personal and premillennial and imminent coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I believe in the resurrection of the dead, for the believer to resurrection of life and joy with the Lord, for the unbeliever to resurrection of judgement and everlasting punishment.